

FITNESS

Ready, Set....Exercise

Sometimes it seems as if America is in an exercise craze. Gyms and fitness centers are multiplying and people of all ages are going. Outdoors, you can depend on seeing joggers, bikers, skateboarders and walkers. Reports on the importance of exercise also appear frequently in the news. It seems as if Americans know that they should stay active.

Yet according to a recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 40 percent of the U.S. population fails to exercise in their leisure time. Although 60 percent said they get ten minutes or more of physical activity during their leisure hours, only about 30 percent of the population actually meets current recommendations for regular exercise.

The CDC defines regular exercise as at least 30 minutes of moderate activity five days per week. Moderate activity causes light sweating or moderate increase in breathing or heart rate. Vigorous activity, which causes heavy sweating or large increases in breathing or heart rate, can be substituted, as long as it occurs at least three days a week for 20 minutes or more.

Over time, even this amount of regular activity helps prevent a range of health problems and diseases. For example, regular exercise appears to reduce overall cancer risk significantly. However, for greater protection against cancer and other ailments, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) suggests people should aim for an hour of moderate activity a day and one hour of vigorous activity each week.

Because leisure time for working adults can be rare and short lasting, it's important to develop a schedule or habit to ensure that exercise is a part of your day. If you're an office worker, one idea is to practice simple yoga moves at your desk. These exercises can help alleviate the strain from working on a computer. A hike in a park can be very refreshing for both the body and mind.

For help in developing simple exercises at work, visit the website My Daily Yoga, www.mydailyyoga.com, which has excellent demonstration pictures. To find places to hike in South Carolina visit SC State Trails Program at www.sctrails.net for the United States visit Trail Link, www.trailink.com or the National Park Service at www.nps.gov for more information.

Source: The American Institute for Cancer Research



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